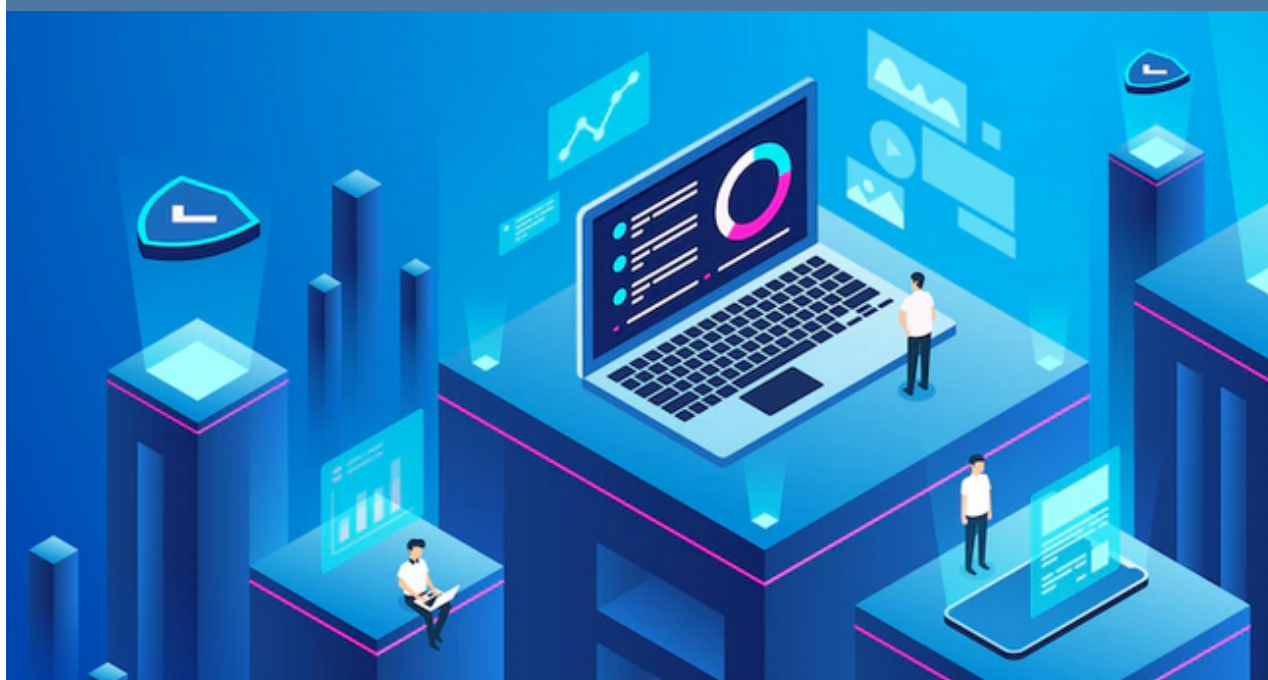




Best Practices for Conducting IAM Assessments



2022

White Paper

This white paper explores various aspects of reviewing an enterprise's identity and access management platform on a periodic basis. Further, it explores the various processes, strategies and matrices adopted by Avancer to conduct a comprehensive IAM assessment solution as per the budget of a client.

Introduction

Identity and Access Management (IAM) is extremely powerful, but requires careful coordination with data and processes, thorough knowledge of business applications and systems, as well as coding and configuring IAM connectors.

Further, organizational friction and technical hurdles impede IAM implementation and even stop companies from getting to a successful deployment the first time, along with undertaking any required updation over a period of time.

The challenge has also shifted from shielding the enterprise perimeter to guarding identities, along with the various resources accessed by the users. Given the dynamic digital environment wherein numerous devices, endpoints, applications could be dissolving perimeter – which can be exploited if it is protected in a traditional way – implementing a flexible, fast, as well as cost-efficient solution for securing identities is vital.

To overcome these obstacles and identify key components for developing a robust identity security platform, it becomes imperative to conduct IAM assessment. This also allows developing stakeholder buy-in, defining implementation plan and understanding dependencies and required timelines to deploy, migrate or upgrade an IAM platform.

Why review identity management platform?

Cybercriminals, in the past few years, have been using methods such as executing brute-force attacks on remote workers, sending coronavirus-related phishing mails, hacking collaborative platforms, undertaking password spraying attacks, among others, to exploit system vulnerability, resulting in rapid increase in data breaches, malware attacks and other challenges for enterprises.

Further, with the adoption of technologies, shift in working environment and deployment of stringent regulations to secure digital identities by the Governments world over, it has become imperative for organizations to improve its security parameters, curtail insider attacks and increase its system efficiency to proactively address IT security challenges. Organizations, therefore, need to revisit their IAM platforms to understand whether their systems and networks are protected from the above mentioned issues.

For measuring the efficiency of any IAM service, it is necessary to conduct the assessment of implemented IAM tools at regular intervals. This will provide enterprises the following benefits:

- Ensuring better control of access and adhering to enterprise identity policies
- Maintaining stringent identity security measures, protecting crucial business information / sensitive data
- Securing and managing legacy/on-prem, hybrid or cloud applications
- Warranting adherence to existing, updated and future compliance and governance policies
- Reducing risk of security breaches and insider threats
- Providing seamless consumer experience

Who should conduct IAM assessment?

Enterprises may conduct a review of their identity management platform to assess the current state against industry best practices, and identify the risk-areas, gaps or deficiencies in the platform. It would help formulate an overall long-term strategy with detailed recommendations for enhancing the capabilities of the system and building a roadmap, with a focus on achieving quick wins, as well as moving towards the strategic plans.

Organizations should conduct IAM assesement in case they are focusing on achieving the following goals:

1

REMOTE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Enterprises that have shifted or planning to shift to a remote working enviornment

2

IAM MIGRATION

Enterprises that are planning to update their IAM platform or migrate to another identity platform

3

IAM IMPLEMENTATION

Enterprises that are planning to implement IAM solutions for the very first time

4

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Enterprises wanting to conduct vulnerability assessment of their present systems

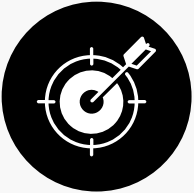
How to develop IAM Assessment strategies?

For securing an organization, the best defense is IAM. However, it could also be the weakest link if it is not implemented properly. IAM Assessment could be the way forward. Enterprises may conduct a review of their identity management platform to assess the current state against industry best practices, and identify the risk-areas, gaps or deficiencies in the platform. It would help formulate an overall long-term strategy with detailed recommendations for enhancing the capabilities of the system and building a roadmap, with a focus on achieving quick wins, as well as moving towards the strategic goals. Here's a checklist on how to create a robust IAM Assessment strategy:



DETERMINE CURRENT STATE

Gather information on current performance levels. This is the phase wherein the existing infrastructure, business processes, and operations are appraised. It is imperative to collect and review the company's documentation currently in place to gain a better understanding of the current organizational structure, implemented technology solutions, operational procedures, system functionality and controls design, and the business processes and practices related to the IAM program



DEFINE TARGET STATE

Set out to establish desired performance levels. Based on the findings in the first phase, business goals and strategies are revisited and essential functionalities are defined. Sessions are being arranged with various groups, to assess the current interface, understand their pain-points/roadblocks and their wish-list of what they would like an identity management solution to provide, to help efficiency and ease-of-use. Based on the gathered data, an evaluation matrix is developed, against which, the system is being assessed. Additional due diligence would be conducted to validate the findings and the assumptions.



BUILD IDM STRATEGY

Undertake a comprehensive gap analysis. Draw out existing voids in a system to achieve desired performance levels to improvise the existing network and systems.



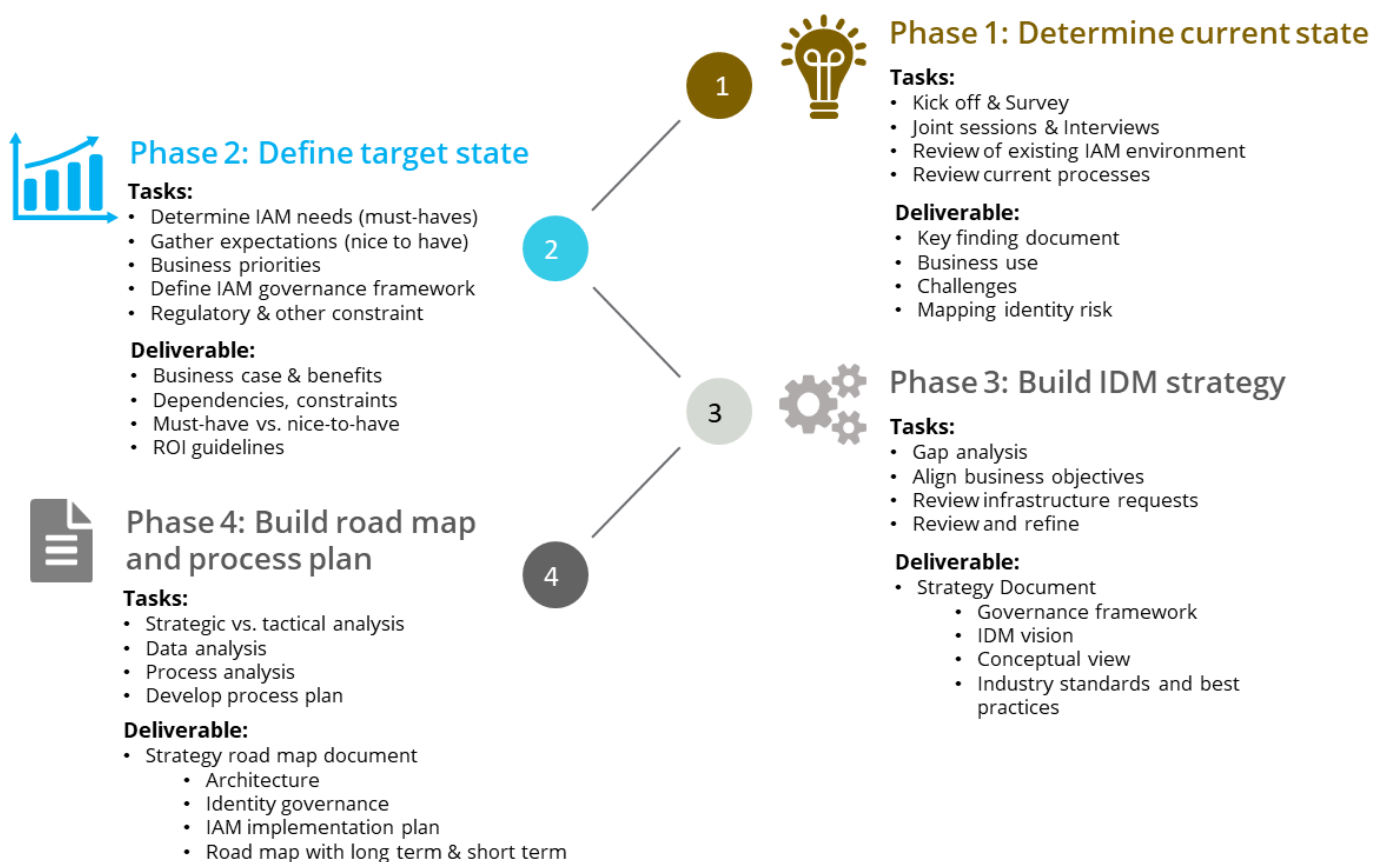
BUILD ROADMAPS AND PROJECT PLAN

Once the gap areas are identified, a future roadmap and recommendations are also suggested to address the issues and create a robust IAM platform. For the ease of implementation, these recommendations are divided into the quadrant of low effort/high value, high effort/high value, low effort/low value, and high effort/low value, providing a comprehensive overview for the management to allocate budget accordingly.

Avancer's Assessment Approach

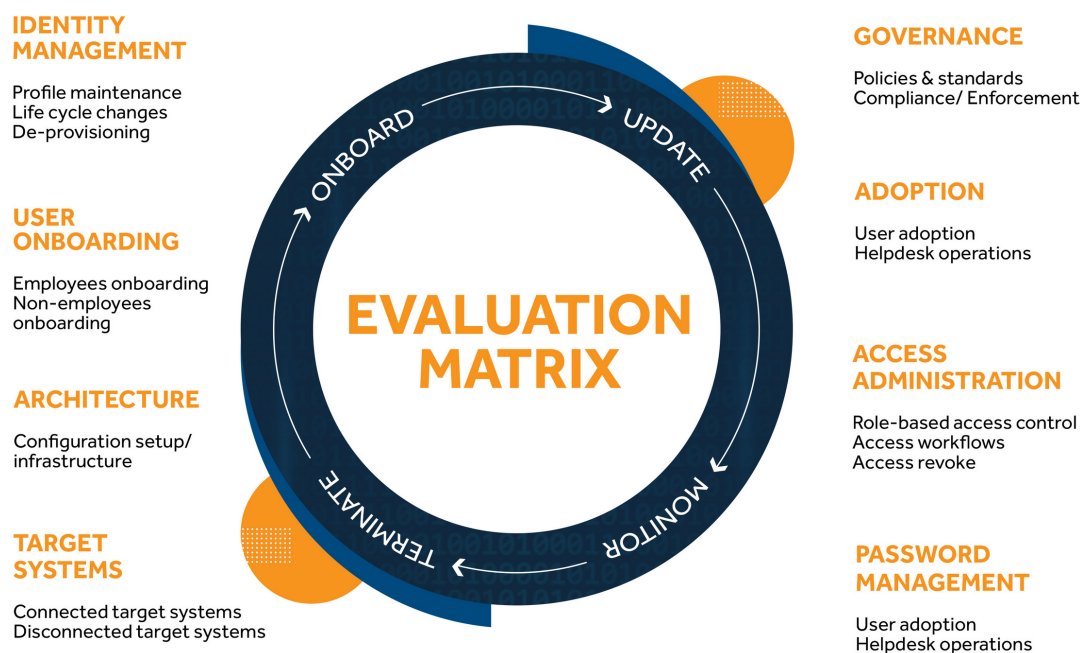
The typical assessment approach includes reviewing of the current setup, the documentation available and interviewing key stakeholders of the enterprise, among other processes. During the course of the study, sessions are being arranged with various groups, to assess the current interface, understand their pain-points/roadblocks and their wish-list of what they would like an identity management solution to provide, to help efficiency and ease-of-use. Further, a roadmap along with cost estimates for product and project implementation to the company's business goals are prepared.

Avancer collects and reviews the company's documentation currently in place to gain a better understanding of the current organizational structure, implemented technology solutions, operational procedures, system functionality and controls design, and the business processes and practices related to the IAM program. Avancer will also perform a hands-on, detailed review of the current processes. Based on the gathered data, an evaluation matrix is developed, against which, the system is being assessed. Additional due diligence would be conducted to validate the findings and the assumptions.



Evaluation Matrix

At Avancer, our assessment experts have been able to create an indigenous evaluation matrix, basis which, a thorough review of the IAM platform is undertaken to critically assess the present system and identify, risk or gap areas. The matrix is formulated based on the lifecycle of an identity management solution, starting from user onboarding, updation, monitoring and termination of users. Each of these processes are further sub-categorized, with specific job roles, as discussed below. The matrix is being customized as per the requirements of the client, along with assimilating suggestions from core divisions within a corporate, including the management team, HR, IT and Operations.



After conducting the due diligence on the existing platform, we assign system status in three categories:

- Almost non-existent and requires major work
- Work needed to streamline and optimize
- Refinements required for added value

Once the gap areas are identified, a future roadmap and recommendations are also suggested to address the issues and create a robust IAM platform. For the ease of implementation, these recommendations are divided into the quadrant of **low effort/high value, high effort/high value, low effort/low value, and high effort/low value**, providing a comprehensive overview for the management to allocate budget accordingly.

End goals of IAM assessment

Post the assessment of the IAM platform with the assistance of our Evaluation Matrix, we help clients to achieve a more comprehensive and robust IAM system. It enables enterprises to:

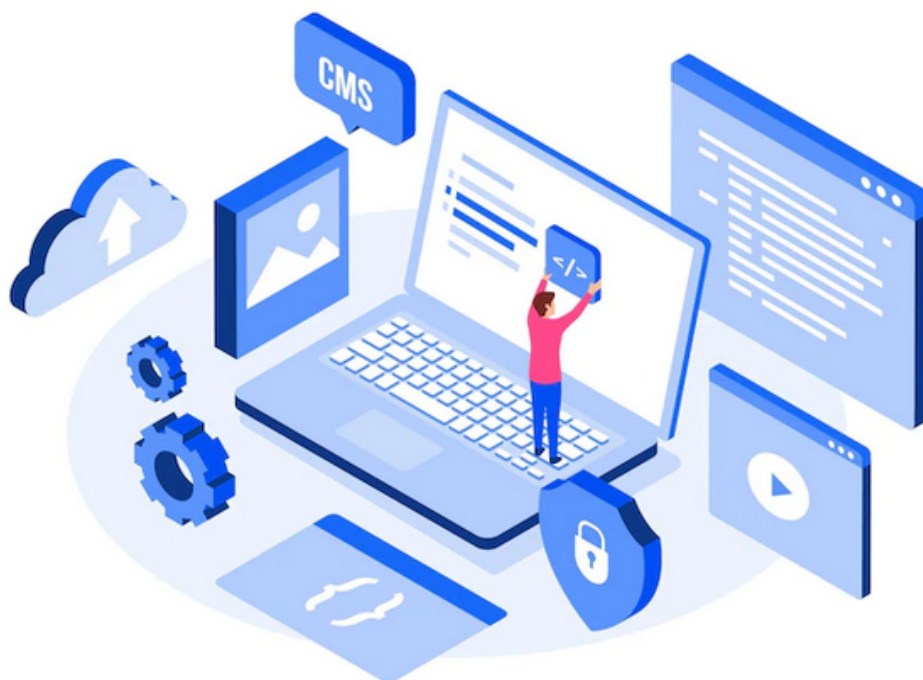
- **Get an overview of present system:** The organization is being able to view their current IAM platform in a structured manner, mapping various pain points and challenges within the system that need to be addressed.
- **Get a future-looking assessment roadmap:** The roadmap provides detailed future recommendation, processes and progress to enable enterprises to keep evaluating their platform on a regular basis.
- **Get a comprehensive IAM strategy:** Milestone-based IAM strategies are created to help organizations create short-term, mid-term and long-term goals, in alignment with their business and growth strategy.
- **Get achievable solutions to resolve challenges:** Due to the complex processes being involved in managing an IAM platform, it is imperative to create realistic and achievable solutions that could be implemented in a staggered manner over a period of time.
- **Get a resolution based on allocated budget:** Along with receiving achievable solutions, organizations are also able to get these recommendations as per their allocated budget / spending on IAM.

Conclusion

IAM assessment enables enterprises to understand the gap areas in their existing system, along with gaining perspective to develop long-drawn IAM strategy. Such assessment helps to identify whether the current implemented technologies, policies or processes are relevant as per the dynamic market condition or require any updates, and if so, what kind of updates and at what price point.

The gap analysis usually focuses on understanding the robustness of corporate IAM governance policies, privileged access management, authorization and role management, user lifecycle management, authentication, access control and federation, audit, reporting and event monitoring.

Post the comprehensive assessment of IAM platform, enterprises are able to develop appropriate IAM programs and implement them in a systematic manner, as per their allocated budget.



AVANCER'S EXPERTISE IN IAM



CONSULT IT SECURITY ADVISORS AT AVANCER

Allow us to serve you, reach out to IT Security and IAM experts to strategize your IT Ecosystem

At Avancer, we understand that one of the compelling factors for organizations to bring in technical solutions is to adhere by existing compliances. However, there is so much more to technical solutions, and these add on benefits help in bringing efficiency, security and operational automation. We add an edge to solutions in Identity and Access Governance, IT Security and Big Data by closing any loopholes, and tailoring the solutions as per the needs of the business, industrial standards and regulatory considerations.

For more information on how we can make a difference in your organization, drop us a request [here](#) or directly contact our IT Security Leaders

Contact Us

Avancer Corporation

30 N Main Street

Suite 201 Cranbury

NJ 08512, USA

Tel: +1 (609) 632-1285

Fax: +1 (877) 843-8594

Email: info@goavancer.com

Website: avancercorp.com

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